All this over

the only thing to be done for the deceased is the annual shraddham, or yearly funeral commemorative rite. Rice balls (pindams) are made and given to crows. Clapping of hands announces to these birds that the rice is being thrown for them, and, should they come at once and eat it, it is obvious that the spirit of the deceased is pleased with the offering, and is not likely to be troublesome. But, on the other hand, should they not come and eat, it is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the Taravâd had better look out.

The ceremonial connected with the funeral rites which have been described, illustrates the immense difference which exists, as it does in the case of all peoples more or less cultured, between the primitive belief of the race, and the higher, the more abstract, religion which they believe they believe. With races, as with children, the earliest associations are the strongest, and persist through the life of the race as through the life of the individual. The higher power of reasoning which comes with higher development does not disperse them altogether. The people who practise these rites are good Hindus, and, according to the theory of their Hindu religion, the spirit which is emancipated from the body at death at once inhabits another body, for suffering or for enjoyment measured by the deserts of the bodily existence which has just ceased. This is the higher religion. And yet they admit that the spirit is connected with the shadow, not with the breath;—and feel in their hearts that it still lingers in the house and absorbs the essence of the ingredients of the food offered to it; that it must be propitiated or it will cause harm to the living. This is the primitive religion. It is supposed that the spirits of those whose ashes are deposited at Benares or other place of sanctity, and for whose sake alms are given to Brâhmans, remain at those holy spots, and become more and more god-like. This is a mixture of both. We are here concerned with facts rather than theories and, as much has been said already of this side of the subject of comparative religions, we may proceed with our facts. The spirits of those who have committed suicide or met death by any violent means are always particularly vicious and troublesome to the Taravâd, their spirit possessing and rendering miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless pacified they will ruin the Taravâd, so Brâhman priests are called in and appease them by means of Tilahômam, a rite in which sacrifical fire is raised, and ghee, gingelly and other things are offered through it.

769 [825] 771 775 [822] [782] [766] [613] [782]

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar
Tiyyar

This partial avoidance between a woman and her older natal kinsmen begins after the *tāli*-rite, when she receives the title *amma* (lit. 'mother'). In the rite, it seems, the girl is fictitiously made mature by the mock menstrual seclusion – before she is in danger of actually becoming mature; her sexuality is then given away by her natal kinsmen to a vicarious husband outside her lineage. For this is the one right in her forbidden to her natal kinsmen; the rest – her domestic services and procreative power – remain theirs throughout her life. Even among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the brother may call home his sister and her children and require her to divorce her husband. He must, moreover, maintain her if she is divorced, and her children have the right to return to the mother's brother's house as his heirs.

The unconscious desire for adelphic incest in these matrilineal castes appears in other rites. I have mentioned the rites performed by the brother of a girl at her first menstruation among South Malabar Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars. Later, when the South Malabar Nayar woman was in the fifth or seventh month of her pregnancy, she was formerly seated before her brother who poured tamarind juice into her mouth from the point of the *taravāḍ*'s ancestral sword. It was believed that he thus conveyed strength (*sakthi*, a generalized form of energy believed to reside *par excellence* in semen) and also martial valour, into the body of the first-born child. This seems a clear instance of the brother's unconscious wish to impregnate his sister himself, as well as an explicit recognition that, in matriliny, the mother's brother has the rights of a *pater* in the child.

Among South Malabar Tiyyars the tamarind-juice is given by the pregnant woman's brother to her husband, and by the husband's sister to his wife. This rite is more in keeping with a patrilineal system in which the husband has primary procreative rights in his wife. At the same time, it seems likely that the rite reflects the brother's unconscious desire to pass his 'strength' to his sister and her child, through the husband, and the sister's desire to contribute to the making of the child, and thus usurp the role of her brother's wife. The rite is beautifully in keeping with double unilineal descent, in which brothers and sisters retain strong interest and rights in each others' offspring.

The unconscious fear, and underlying it, an unconscious desire, of women for sexual attack from a male parental figure (the father in this case) probably appears also in the South Malabar Tiyyar rites which precede the tamarind-drinking. These are to drive out evil spirits who may attack the child in the womb. The woman sits at night before a group of washermen (Mannans) who invoke the spirit in song, and perform devil-dancing in weird masks. By morning, the more susceptible of the women present, overcome by the spirit, may go into fits. Finally a live cock is held against the woman's forehead, and rice thrown over her head. If she has a fit, the cock is beheaded and its blood offered to the evil spirit. The rites are paid for by the woman's father. In view of what is known of the beliefs concerning incubi in western societies (Jones 1931, ch. 3), it seems probable that these rites issue from the unconscious female fear of being attacked sexually by the father, and the recognition of the father's unconscious desire to kill the child in his daughter's womb. The Mannan devil-dancers (who sometimes consciously impersonate the dead ancestors of a propitiating Tiyyar lineage) may be interpreted to represent the woman's lineage forbears and thus, collectively, her father.[1]

Again, in all the groups studied the *taravāḍ* is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-

[1] This interpretation is practically certain in view of the almost identical ceremony carried out one year after the death of a South Malabar Tiyyar. It is believed that before this the spirit is earth-bound and cannot be invoked to pass to heaven. On the night fixed, small girls of the *taravāḍ* sit before Mannan and Panan devil-dancers who, as in the pregnancy ceremonies, wear weird masks and sing to invoke the spirit. Late at night one of the girls may become possessed by it and talk like the deceased, and give commands to the family about its future conduct. After this ceremony the spirit is freed from its bonds to the earth (see Thurston and Rangachari 1909, VII, p. 91). Since the possession of the girls by an ancestral spirit here is of the same kind as in the pregnancy rites and both types of spirit are called *pradham*, there seems little doubt that the evil spirit who attacks is also ancestral and thus an *amar*.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

or *bhavanam*, while the man in authority dwells in an *idam*, and the Raja in a *kovilakam* or *kottaram*. A separate name for each *tarawad* or family is peculiar to this coast. 342 564

There are some superstitious beliefs entertained by the Nayars as well as other high caste-men, in the selection of the site for a house and compound, the quality of the soil, the site of the tank, well, cow-shed, and the edifice for the family deity; and as an account of these will be of some ethnographic interest, it is given below:— 342 351 823 [564]

The best site should abound with milky trees full of fruits and flowers; its boundary should be of a quadrangular form, level and smooth with a sloping declivity towards the east, producing a hard sound with a stream running from left to right, of an agreeable odour, fertile, and of an uniform colour, containing a great quantity of soil, producing water when dug to the height of a man's arm raised above his head, and situated in a region of moderate temperature. The ground possessed of qualities directly opposite to those mentioned above is the worst, and that which has a mixed nature is of the middling quality. [1]

The site to be avoided is described in a special manner as follows:—That which has the form of a circle, or a semicircle, or containing three, five or six angles, or resembling a trident or shaped like the back of a fish, the back of an elephant, or a turtle, or the face of a cow, etc., situated opposite to any of the intermediate quarters abounding with human skulls, stones or worms, ant-hills, bones, slimy earth, decayed wood, coals, dilapidated wells, subterraneous pits, fragments of tiles, limestones, ashes, husks of corns and exposed to the wafted effluvia of curds, oil, honey, dead bodies, and fishes; such a spot should be avoided on every account.

In regard to colour and taste, ground with smell like that of ghee and with sweet taste is good for Brahmans; that with the colour and smell of blood and with an astringent taste, for Kshatriyas; that with yellow colour, smell of boiled rice and bitter taste, for Vaisyas; and that with dark colour, smell of toddy and taste of cow-dung, for Sudras. [822] [827]

There is also a test for the selection of a site by lighting a lamp in a hole. A hole measuring one cubit in depth, [372]

1. Ramraz's essay on the architecture of the Hindus, London, pp. 15-19.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

342 351 823 372 [524] having been well plastered with mud, a saucer of unbaked earth filled with ghee and four lighted wicks is placed therein, for testing the quality of the soil. If the wicks burn brightly in all four directions, the ground is fit for all the castes including Brahmans and other caste-men. If the wicks do not burn, it will not suit any of the four castes.

342 804 777 822 Auspicious times for the construction of houses.

If the house is constructed by a person in the month of Medam (April-May) he gets disease: in Edavam (May-June) he gets money and jewel: in Mithunam (June-July) there will be death: in Ashad or Karkadakam (July-August) he gets servants and jewels, but no beasts; in Chingam (August-September) friendship; in Kanni (September-October) loss of friends; in Thulam (October-November) death of his wife; in Vrischigam (November-December) money and crops; in Dhanu (December-January) he will become a devotee; in Makaram (January-February) there will be fear from enemies and thieves, but the builder will know of profits from many directions: in Kumbham (February-March), danger of fires; in Meenam (March-April) gold and sons.

The following asterisms are auspicious for commencing a building:—Aswini, Rohini, Mulam, the three Uttaras, Mrigasirsha, Swathi, Hasta, Anuradha. All days of the week, except Sunday and Tuesday, are auspicious. A house should be commenced at auspicious moments known as *muhurtas*: Sveda, Mitra, Mahendra, Gandharva, Rohini and also Raja Sävitra. The erection of the pillars should be performed at auspicious *lagnas*, moments when the sun and the moon are favourable; other moments should be avoided.

342 777 821 Inauspicious times.

Building operations should not be commenced in the rainy season nor at the end of the third part of the dark fortnight, and in the first and second part of the bright fortnight. Of the phases of the moon, the fourth, ninth, and fourteenth should be avoided. Tuesday is also to be omitted; for working on that day brings injury or bad luck. Days marked with dangers natural or any other, arising out of the earth, sky, or heavenly bodies and other calamities, such as the death of a friend, and those made ominous by the influence of some planets are considered inauspicious. A well informed person should do his work when the moon and the stars are favourable.